

PURPOSE AND GOALS

30-A MRSA §4331 directs the State Planning Office to determine the effectiveness of state and local efforts to achieve the purposes and legislated goals of the Act.

Legislative Purpose

The purposes of the Act are as follows:

- A:** Establish in each municipality, local comprehensive planning and land use management;
- B:** Encourage municipalities to identify the tools and resources to effectively plan for and manage future development within their jurisdictions with a maximum of local initiative and flexibility;
- C:** Encourage land use ordinances, tools, and policies based on local comprehensive plans;
- D:** Incorporate regional considerations into local planning and decision-making so as to ensure consideration of regional needs and the regional impact of development;
- E:** Provide for continued direct state regulation of development proposals that occur in areas of statewide concern, that directly impact natural resources of statewide significance or that by their scale or nature otherwise affect vital state interests;
- F:** Encourage the widest possible involvement by the citizens of each municipality in all aspects of the planning and implementation process, in order to ensure that the plans developed by municipalities have had the benefit of citizen input.

Statutory Goals

The Legislature established a set of state goals to provide overall direction and consistency to the planning and regulatory actions of all state and municipal agencies affecting natural resource management, land use, and development as follows:

- GOAL A: Development Sprawl and Public Facilities** - To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the State's rural character, making efficient use of public services and preventing development sprawl.
- GOAL B: Capital Investment Strategy** - To plan for, finance, and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development;

- GOAL C: Economic Development** - To promote an economic climate which increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being;
- GOAL D: Affordable Housing** - To encourage and promote affordable housing opportunities for all Maine citizens;
- GOAL E: Water Resources** - To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the State's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers and coastal areas;
- GOAL F: Critical Natural Resources** - To protect the State's other critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shorelands, scenic vistas and unique natural areas;
- GOAL G: Marine Resources** - To protect the State's marine resources industry, ports, and harbors from incompatible development and to promote access to the shore for commercial fishermen and the public;
- GOAL H: Agricultural and Forest Resources** - To safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development which threatens those resources;
- GOAL I: Historic and Archaeological Resources** - To preserve the State's historic and archaeological resources;
- GOAL J: Recreation and Access** - To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.

Regional Coordination

Coordination between communities is important in order to achieve success in reaching the planning goals established in the Act. The Act requires a regional coordination strategy as follows:

- Strategy:** A regional coordination strategy must be developed with other municipalities to manage shared resources and facilities, such as rivers, aquifers, transportation facilities, and others. This program must provide for consistency with the comprehensive plans of other municipalities for these resources and facilities [30-A MRSA §4326 (4)]

Evaluation and Tracking Development

The Act contains directives for evaluating effectiveness as follows.

- Strategy:** The office shall conduct an ongoing evaluation process to determine the effectiveness of state and local efforts to achieve the purposes and goals of the

Act. The office shall seek the assistance of other state agencies. If requested, all state agencies shall render assistance to the office in this effort. In conducting the evaluation, the office shall develop criteria that are objective, verifiable, and quantifiable. [30-A MRSA §4331]

Coastal Policies

Finally, if the municipality is a coastal community, it must also specify what approaches it will take to address the following state coastal management policies:

1. To promote the maintenance, development, and revitalization of the State's ports and harbors for fishing, transportation, and recreation;
2. To manage the marine environment and its related resources to preserve and improve the ecological integrity and diversity of marine communities and habitats, to expand our understanding of the productivity of the Gulf of Maine and coastal waters, and to enhance the economic value of the State's renewable marine resources;
3. To support shoreline development that gives preference to water-dependent uses over other uses, that promotes public access to the shoreline, and that considers the cumulative effects of development on coastal resources;
4. To discourage growth and new development in coastal areas where, because of coastal storms, flooding, landslides, or sea-level rise, it is hazardous to human health and safety;
5. To encourage and support cooperative state and municipal management of coastal resources;
6. To protect and manage critical habitats and natural areas of state and national significance, and to maintain the scenic beauty and character of the coast, even in-areas where development occurs;
7. To expand the opportunities for outdoor recreation, and to encourage appropriate coastal tourist activities and development;
8. To restore and maintain the quality of our fresh, marine, and estuarine waters to allow for the broadest possible diversity of public and private uses; and
9. To restore and maintain coastal air quality to protect the health of citizens and visitors, and to protect enjoyment of the natural beauty and maritime character of the Maine coast.